

## **Testimony of Sue Willette**

### **H.B. No. 5301 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING OPIOID ANALGESIC PRESCRIPTIONS TO MINORS**

**March 3, 2016 Committee on Children Public Hearing**

Senator Bartolomeo, and members of the Committee on Children, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on HB 5301 An Act Concerning Opioid Analgesic Prescriptions Issued to Minors. As a parent of two addicted children I am supporting this bill.

The City of Meriden and Connecticut as whole are in the midst of an epidemic size crisis when it comes to opiate abuse and no one knows this better than me. First off I would like to tell you all about the heartache that comes along with addiction. My son, Jon, is 25 years old and currently incarcerated because of the very poor choices that he has made because of his addiction. In looking back on our 10 year journey of Jon's addiction and mental health issue I have come to the conclusion that this journey started when he was 14 years old and had his appendix removed and was prescribed 60 Percocet for the pain. At the time I didn't have a clue about this medication and what it would eventually end up doing to my son and my family. No one ever said that these pills were highly addictive and cause the Chaos and heartbreak that we have endured over the last 10 years but especially the last 7 months. For 10 years my son has been in and out of treatment and prescribed copious amounts of antidepressants, mood stabilizers and most recently Suboxone (which is an opiate antagonist that is still highly addictive). From there unfortunately it turned to heroin. My youngest son, Chris, is 21 years old and 2 years was in his second year of nursing school when he hurt his back and was prescribed 60 Vicodin for the pain. This turned into a full blown addiction to opiates which because he was at school I didn't know about until he turned to heroin and almost died in August of 2015. I just want you to be informed of how readily available opiates seem to be to college aged students.

I support this bill and what it stands for. Our children are dying at an alarming rate do to addiction and the safeguards of this bill need to be implemented. Parents need to know the dangers of opiates and what they can do to our children and their families because I am a firm believer that Addiction is genetic. Doctors need to take a full family history to see what the risk factors are for their patients and they must use the Prescribed Drug Monitoring Program at all times. They also should be prescribing non-opioid medications should be administered if at all possible. This society is so quick to give our children addictive medications without knowing the consequences. Not just opiates but also benzodiazapines (Benzos) which more times than not lead to abuse or moving on to drugs like heroin.

In closing I again would like to thank you for letting me submit my testimony. Even though my sons are still alive because of opiates we have lost to boys that they once were and they have been robbed of the loves that they should have lived without the pain and struggles that they will now live with forever.

Sincerely,

Sue Willette

Meriden, CT